

Ulliance RESPONSE

Current and practical information for you and your family Helping Children Deal with Tragedy

- Allow your children to express their feelings. Take time to listen and talk but do not force discussion. Expressing your own feelings about the event can help promote open discussion. If your child asks questions, provide factual information that is age appropriate. Very young children may be unaware of the events and you may choose not to discuss this tragedy with them.
- Let your children know what you are doing to keep them safe. Remind them that adults are doing everything possible to prevent them from harm. If appropriate, develop or discuss your family's own disaster and safety plans.
- Limit your own and your children's exposure to television and news radio. Watching these images over and over can be detrimental to both children and adults. When young children see events repeated again and again they often think the event is re-occurring. Depending on their age, restricting media viewing can be appropriate. If they do watch television, watch it with them so you can promote an open discussion.
- Be aware of your own reactions. Your children look to you for guidance and will gauge their current situation based on your reaction. Be honest about your feelings, but be calm and reassuring.
- Maintain your normal routines. Children need a sense of stability. Continue their daily activities as much as possible.
- Let your children know how much you love them. Personal contact, such as hugs, can be re-assuring.
- Talking to your children about such senseless violence can be a difficult, but important task. Many experts say not to bring the topic up with your child unless they bring it up to you. This is a decision you must make based on the age of the child.
- Young children may be unaware of the events and may be unable to process them. You may want to ask children open ended questions to see what they do know.
- Children take their cues from their parents. Limit the details. Talking to children younger than 7 is very different than speaking to a high school student. If you think your child has been significantly impacted by a tragedy and are experiencing signs of increased anxiety, contact your school counselor, a family doctor, or a mental health professional. This may include a call to Ulliance.



- Signs of increased anxiety in children often present themselves through physical complaints. This may include but is not limited to: trouble sleeping, trouble eating, nightmares, headaches and stomachaches.
- Ulliance provides no cost and confidential counseling for you and your family. Contact us at **800-448-8326**.
- Valuable information is also available to you through the Life Enhancement Resource Center at www.LifeAdvisorEAP.com. To login, enter your company name and the city in which you work.

